Rental Pain Index
September 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rental Pain Index (RPI) - September 2024

The Rental Pain Index (RPI) analysis for September 2024 continues to highlight escalating rental pressures across most Australian states. Nationally, the percentage of suburb areas (SA2s) with an RPI of 75 or higher has remained at 68%, reflecting ongoing rental stress across the country.

In New South Wales (NSW), the proportion of SA2s in extreme rental pain has slightly decreased from 67% to 65%, though affordability remains strained with average rents increasing by 9% and 33% of income spent on rent. Queensland (QLD) shows a modest improvement, with the percentage of SA2s in extreme pain falling from 78% to 75%, despite rental prices rising by 10% and 32% of income allocated to rent.

South Australia (SA) saw a rise in extreme rental pain, from 80% to 81%, with rents increasing by 11% and 32% of income spent on rent. Western Australia (WA) experienced stability, with 77% of SA2s in extreme pain, driven by a 16% rent increase and 32% of income going towards rent.

Victoria (VIC) observed a slight decline in extreme rental pain, from 71% to 70%, with rents rising 11% and rental costs reaching 28% of income. The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) saw a marginal rise in extreme rental pain from 8% to 9%, with affordability tightening further. The Northern Territory (NT) experienced little change, with extreme rental pain stable at 31%, despite a modest 2% rent increase and 25% of income spent on rent.

Tasmania (TAS) saw a small increase in extreme rental pain, rising from 27% to 31%, with rental affordability deteriorating despite a 1% rent increase and 31% of income devoted to rent.

Overall, rental affordability challenges persist, with significant portions of household income directed towards rent, particularly in NSW, QLD, SA, and WA. These trends continue to strain household finances and could have broader economic impacts. Targeted interventions remain critical to addressing rental affordability and ensuring a sustainable housing market.

STATE AVERAGES

STATE	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
ACT	1	24	2.3	51
NSW	9	**33**	1.7	**78**
NT	2	25	1.3	66
QLD	10	**32**	1.4	**81**
SA	11	**32**	1.1	**85**
TAS	1	**31**	1.9	62
VIC	11	28	1.8	**76**
WA	16	**32**	1.6	**82**
National	10	**31**	1.6	**77**

The Rental Pain Index (RPI) data for September 2024 reveals continued challenges in rental affordability across Australia. The national average RPI has risen to 77, up from 72 in August, indicating growing pressure on renters. National rental affordability has increased to 31% of household income, highlighting ongoing struggles for Australians to manage rent costs.

Western Australia (WA) remains under strain, with an RPI of 82, unchanged from August. Rental prices have increased by 16%, and renters are spending 32% of income on rent, showing continued affordability challenges.

Queensland (QLD) sees slight improvement, with the RPI at 81, down from 83. Rent prices have increased by 10%, with 32% of income allocated to rent, maintaining significant pressure on renters.

South Australia (SA) now has the highest RPI at 85, up from 82 last month. Rental prices have risen by 11%, and 32% of income is required for rent, reflecting growing concerns over affordability.

In **New South Wales (NSW)**, the RPI has decreased to 78 from 79, though renters still allocate 33% of income to rent. A 9% annual rental increase indicates persistent affordability issues.

Victoria (VIC) holds steady at an RPI of 76, with a 12-month rent increase of 11%. Renters spend 28% of income on rent, showing a relatively high level of affordability strain.

The **Australian Capital Territory (ACT)** shows an RPI of 51, up from 46. Rent affordability remains manageable, with 24% of income spent on rent, and the vacancy rate tightening to 2.3%.
The Northern Territory (NT) remains stable with an RPI of 66. Renters spend 25% of income on rent, and prices have increased by 2%.

Tasmania (TAS) maintains an RPI of 62, with 31% of income spent on rent and a vacancy rate of 1.9%.

This analysis shows that rental stress remains widespread, with South Australia and Queensland facing the most significant affordability challenges.

EXTREME PAIN

STATE	Total Suburb Areas Sampled (SA2)	Total With a Rental Pain Index Over 75	Percentage of the State in Extreme Rental Pain
ACT	76	6	8
NSW	590	385	**65**
NT	36	10	28
QLD	489	366	**75**
SA	134	109	**81**
TAS	77	15	19
VIC	467	308	**66**
WA	203	154	**76**
National	**2072**	**1353**	**65**

The September 2024 Rental Pain Index (RPI) continues to highlight severe rental stress across Australia, with a focus on suburb areas where RPI scores exceed 75, signifying extreme distress.

Western Australia (WA) remains one of the most affected states, with 77% of suburb areas in severe rental stress, consistent with last month's figure. The state continues to grapple with significant rental affordability challenges.

Queensland (QLD) sees a slight decrease in extreme rental stress, with 75% of its suburb areas now affected, down from 78% last month. However, the state remains one of the hardest-hit regions for rental stress.

South Australia (SA) experiences a small increase, with 81% of its suburb areas facing extreme rental stress, up from 80% in August. This marks SA as one of the states experiencing the highest levels of rental pressure.

New South Wales (NSW) sees a minor decrease, with 65% of its suburbs in severe rental stress, down from 67%. Victoria (VIC) follows a similar trend, with 71% of suburbs affected, down from 71% last month, indicating persistent but stable affordability pressures in both states.

Tasmania (TAS) experiences a modest increase, with 31% of its suburbs in extreme stress, up from 27%, reflecting worsening conditions. In contrast, The Northern Territory (NT) sees a decrease to 28%, down from 31%.

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) remains stable, with 8% of suburbs experiencing severe rental stress, the same as last month.

On a national level, 68% of suburb areas are now in extreme rental stress, unchanged from last month, reflecting a nationwide rental affordability crisis that remains a pressing concern.

SOLUTIONS PROPOSED

Exploring solutions to Australia's housing crisis: Insights from economists, faith-based groups and advocacy reports

Australia's housing crisis remains a critical issue, with rising rental prices, low vacancy rates, and widespread affordability challenges placing significant strain on households. Across the country, various groups—including leading economists, faith-based organisations, and advocacy groups—are proposing a range of solutions. This section draws together some of the most prominent ideas aimed at alleviating the crisis and transforming the housing system.

In August 2024, the Economic Society of Australia (ESA) conducted a survey of 48 top economists, asking for their views on how to address the housing crisis. The survey's results revealed strong support for several key measures. The top recommendation, backed by about two-thirds of respondents, was to relax planning restrictions. Economists argue that restrictive zoning laws and local opposition, commonly referred to as NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard), are hindering the construction of new housing in areas where it is most needed. They suggest that easing these restrictions would increase the supply of housing, particularly in high-demand urban areas, helping to reduce competition and stabilise prices.

The second major recommendation was a significant expansion of public and affordable housing. Economists pointed out that Australia's stock of public housing has steadily decreased over the years, and there is now an urgent need for government intervention to reverse this trend. Many suggested redirecting funds from tax concessions like negative gearing and capital gains tax discounts, which are currently benefiting property investors, towards large-scale public housing projects. By increasing the supply of affordable housing, they argue, the government could alleviate the pressure on low- and middle-income renters and help stabilise the broader housing market.

A third suggestion from the survey was the idea of taxing empty homes. This policy, already implemented in some European cities, would encourage property owners to either sell or rent out unused properties, thus increasing the availability of homes on the market. Economists believe that such a measure could help ease the chronic shortage of rental properties in Australia's most competitive markets.

In addition to these economic solutions, advocacy groups have also weighed in with comprehensive reform proposals. The People's Commission into Australia's Housing Crisis recently released a report that outlines eight key recommendations for transforming the housing system. The report advocates for a massive investment in social housing, with a target of building 750,000 units over the next 20 years. It also calls for housing to be recognised as a fundamental human right, enshrined in national policy to ensure that everyone has access to adequate housing.

SOLUTIONS PROPOSED

Exploring solutions to Australia's housing crisis: Insights from economists, faith-based groups and advocacy reports (continued):

The People's Commission into Australia's Housing Crisis report recommends comprehensive national rental reforms, such as implementing caps on rent increases, abolishing no-cause evictions and enforcing minimum housing standards. To fund these initiatives, the commission advocates for phasing out investor tax incentives like negative gearing and capital gains tax discounts, aligning with the recommendations made by the Economic Society of Australia (ESA) survey. Additionally, the report suggests using inclusionary zoning to integrate affordable housing into new developments and emphasises the need to address the specific housing requirements of First Nations communities.

A unique approach to the housing crisis is also emerging from faith-based groups, such as Sydney Anglican Property (SAP). This organisation, which manages the property assets of the Anglican Church in Sydney, is leveraging its land and buildings for broader community benefits. SAP has adopted a mission-driven property development strategy, aiming to use under-utilised church properties to address social needs such as affordable housing, disability services and early learning centres. One of their key projects includes a partnership with Anglicare to bid for the Federal Government's $10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund, with the goal of building 1,000 affordable rental dwellings.

This strategy demonstrates how faith-based groups can play a role in addressing the housing crisis while supporting their own ministry activities. By developing church-owned land in both greenfield and brownfield sites, SAP is creating long-term income streams for parishes while providing much-needed housing for vulnerable communities.

Together, these diverse perspectives—from economists, advocacy groups, and faith-based organisations—offer a comprehensive view of the potential solutions to Australia's housing crisis. Each group brings a unique approach, but all converge on the idea that significant intervention is required to increase housing supply, improve affordability and protect vulnerable renters. Planning reforms, public housing expansion and innovative uses of land owned by faith-based groups are just some of the measures that could help stabilise the housing market. As Australia continues to grapple with rising rents and limited availability, these proposals offer pathways to a more sustainable and equitable housing system. Addressing the housing crisis will not only improve the lives of renters but also contribute to broader economic stability.

20 WORST LGA'S NSW

LGA	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
Bellingen	6	41	0.8	**94**
Fairfield	17	38	1.2	**93**
Cowra	15	30	0.4	**92**
Singleton	12	27	0.3	**90**
Lismore	8	38	1.2	**89**
Albury	6	31	1.4	**89**
Upper Hunter	12	29	1	**89**
Hilltops	9	30	0.9	**88**
Shellharbour	7	36	1.2	**88**
Blue Mountains	5	32	0.5	**88**
Muswellbrook	13	26	0.9	**87**
Penrith	15	28	1.1	**87**
Canterbury-Bankstown	17	39	1.4	**87**
Griffith	5	26	0.1	**86**
Kempsey	4	39	1.4	**86**
Hunters Hill	13	28	1.5	**86**
Sutherland	12	33	1.3	**86**
Blayney	10	28	0.6	**85**
Cobar	14	16	0	**85**
Bega Valley	9	41	1.6	**85**

The top 20 worst Local Government Areas (LGAs) in New South Wales by Rental Pain Index (RPI) reveal significant rental stress across the state, with Bellingen leading the list at an RPI of 94. Renters in Bellingen face severe affordability challenges, with 41% of household income dedicated to rent and a low vacancy rate of 0.8%, indicating tight competition for available properties. Fairfield, ranked second with an RPI of 93, is experiencing a substantial 17% increase in rental prices over the past 12 months, with 38% of income required for rent.

In Cowra and Singleton, both LGAs also face affordability issues, with RPIs of 92 and 90, respectively. Low vacancy rates below 1% further exacerbate the situation, as demand remains high. Other notable LGAs, such as Lismore and Albury, have vacancy rates around 1.2%, but rental affordability remains a concern, with around 38% of income required for rent.

This analysis highlights the urgent need for interventions in these areas to alleviate rental pressure. Persistent low vacancy rates and rising rents are key drivers of rental stress, particularly in regions with high RPI scores, indicating worsening affordability in many parts of the state.

20 WORST LGA'S VIC

LGA	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
Greater Dandenong	19	33	0.9	**92**
Northern Grampians	8	27	1	**92**
Southern Grampians	5	26	0.6	**91**
Swan Hill	11	25	0.1	**90**
Wodonga	6	29	0.8	**89**
Yarriambiack	12	25	1.2	**88**
Wangaratta	10	30	1	**86**
Bass Coast	6	36	2.2	**86**
Maroondah	14	28	0.9	**86**
Bayside (Vic.)	9	32	1.7	**85**
Kingston (Vic.)	11	30	1.2	**85**
Yarra Ranges	17	28	0.9	**85**
Strathbogie	4	34	1.9	**84**
Cardinia	14	27	1.1	**84**
Knox	14	27	1.1	**84**
Towong	12	29	0.8	**84**
Merri-bek	14	27	1.3	**83**
Horsham	5	25	1.7	**83**
Mildura	10	27	1.1	**83**
Darebin	14	28	1.2	**83**

The top 20 worst Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Victoria by Rental Pain Index (RPI) for September 2024 reveal regions facing severe rental stress. A key factor contributing to many high RPI scores is the exceptionally low rate of rental stock being advertised. Many Victorian LGAs have a very low percentage of rental properties listed for rent compared to the total rental stock, intensifying competition among renters, driving up rental prices, and limiting housing options.

In Northern Grampians, for example, renters spend 27% of their income on rent. While this is below the critical 30% threshold, it still signals affordability issues. The low vacancy rate of 1.0% further compounds the problem, indicating a scarcity of available rental housing. Similar trends are evident in Greater Dandenong and Southern Grampians, where low rental stock listings and tight vacancy rates are driving up rental stress.

In addition to the low rental stock listings, another factor influencing the high RPI scores is the change in vacancy rates. Many of these LGAs have experienced significant drops in vacancy rates compared to three months ago, further increasing rental pressure. This decline in available rentals has pushed RPI scores even higher, reflecting the deepening rental stress across these regions.

20 WORST LGA'S QLD

LGA	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
Tablelands	8	34	0.4	**96**
South Burnett	23	36	0.8	**95**
Charters Towers	9	26	0.4	**91**
Southern Downs	10	36	0.8	**91**
North Burnett	16	30	0	**90**
Toowoomba	13	30	0.6	**89**
Bundaberg	13	39	1.3	**88**
Cassowary Coast	16	34	0.7	**88**
Moreton Bay	10	33	1.2	**87**
Mareeba	11	30	0.3	**87**
Cairns	9	32	0.8	**86**
Redland	8	34	1.4	**85**
Sunshine Coast	6	40	1.6	**85**
Western Downs	9	25	0.6	**85**
Murweh	18	18	0	**85**
Barcaldine	10	19	0	**85**
Fraser Coast	9	43	1.3	**84**
Townsville	10	27	1.1	**83**
Burdekin	11	22	0	**83**
Lockyer Valley	7	32	1.1	**83**

The top 20 worst Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Queensland by Rental Pain Index (RPI) for September 2024 reflect regions experiencing high levels of rental stress. Tablelands and South Burnett lead the list with RPIs of 96 and 95, respectively, highlighting significant affordability issues, with renters in these areas spending a substantial portion of their income on rent. Many of the top-ranked LGAs have low vacancy rates, with several below 1%, indicating a tight rental market and limited availability.

A key driver behind the high RPI scores in many of these LGAs is the low percentage of rental stock being advertised. When only a small fraction of the total rental stock is on the market, it creates a competitive environment, pushing rental prices higher and limiting choices for renters. Additionally, another factor affecting the RPI scores is the change in vacancy rates. In many of the worst-affected LGAs, vacancy rates have dropped significantly compared to three months ago, exacerbating rental stress by further tightening the supply of available housing.

These combined factors—low rental stock listings and falling vacancy rates—are putting substantial pressure on renters, driving up RPI scores across Queensland's most stressed LGAs.

20 WORST LGA’S SA

LGA	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
Yankalilla	6	38	1.1	**99**
Victor Harbor	11	45	1.1	**98**
Holdfast Bay	7	33	0.7	**98**
Yorke Peninsula	12	32	0.7	**97**
Mid Murray	18	41	0	**95**
Onkaparinga	11	35	0.9	**92**
Charles Sturt	9	34	0.9	**92**
Tea Tree Gully	14	31	1	**91**
Salisbury	16	35	1.1	**91**
Marion	11	33	0.8	**91**
Grant	10	28	0.9	**90**
Adelaide	11	34	1.5	**90**
Gawler	11	33	1.2	**90**
Alexandrina	11	37	1.5	**90**
Murray Bridge	12	35	0.8	**90**
West Torrens	13	31	0.7	**89**
Port Adelaide Enfield	13	34	1.2	**89**
Copper Coast	7	33	0.1	**89**
Naracoorte Lucindale	9	23	0.7	**88**
Port Pirie	6	29	0.7	**87**

The top 20 worst Local Government Areas (LGAs) in South Australia by Rental Pain Index (RPI) for September 2024 reveal severe rental stress across several regions. Yankalilla tops the list with an RPI of 99, driven by a high rent-to-income ratio of 38% and a vacancy rate of just 1.1%, reflecting tight market conditions. Victor Harbor follows closely with an RPI of 98, where renters face even higher affordability challenges, spending 45% of their income on rent. The vacancy rate here also stands at 1.1%, further limiting available rental options.

Other LGAs, such as Holdfast Bay and Yorke Peninsula, have RPIs of 98 and 97, respectively. In these areas, low vacancy rates of 0.7% signal limited housing availability, while rent affordability remains a significant issue, with renters spending over 30% of their income on housing.

A notable trend among many of the worst-affected LGAs is the low percentage of rental stock being advertised. This lack of available listings, coupled with dropping vacancy rates in some areas, has intensified competition and driven RPI scores higher. As rental availability continues to shrink, many renters across South Australia face rising rents and a growing affordability crisis.

20 WORST LGA'S WA

LGA	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
Irwin	25	34	0.7	**99**
Donnybrook-Balingup	32	33	0	**99**
Dandaragan	19	33	1	**98**
Collie	24	34	1.2	**97**
Bassendean	18	33	0.7	**97**
Denmark	11	39	1.4	**96**
Dardanup	13	32	1.1	**96**
Bayswater	18	33	1	**94**
East Fremantle	6	30	1	**93**
Albany	12	34	0.6	**93**
Mundaring	24	33	0.6	**92**
Northam	18	27	0.3	**92**
Plantagenet	12	27	0	**92**
Chapman Valley	15	26	0.8	**91**
Stirling	17	33	0.9	**90**
Claremont	21	36	1.8	**90**
Upper Gascoyne	9	41	0.6	**90**
Esperance	38	30	0.4	**90**
Belmont	23	35	1.2	**89**
Canning	21	33	1.3	**89**

The top 20 worst Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Western Australia by Rental Pain Index (RPI) for September 2024 reveal significant rental stress across the state. Irwin and Donnybrook-Balingup top the list with RPIs of 99, driven by high rental price increases of 25% and 32%, respectively. Renters in these areas are spending 33-34% of their income on rent, which exceeds the typical affordability threshold. The vacancy rate in Donnybrook-Balingup is effectively 0%, signaling a severe shortage of available rental properties.

Dandaragan and Collie also rank high with RPIs of 98 and 97, further illustrating the widespread affordability challenges in these regions. Both LGAs have vacancy rates around 1%, indicating tight rental markets and limited housing options. The affordability pressures are compounded by rental price increases of over 19%, making it difficult for renters to manage costs.

Across the worst-affected LGAs in Western Australia, low rental stock listings and declining vacancy rates have intensified competition for rental properties, pushing rents higher and driving up RPI scores. These conditions highlight the growing rental crisis in Western Australia, where a lack of available properties and rising rents are straining household budgets and worsening affordability.

10 WORST LGA’S TAS

LGA	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
Devonport	5	34	1.7	**85**
Waratah-Wynyard	3	34	0.7	**84**
Central Coast (Tas.)	2	34	0.6	**80**
George Town	2	34	1.4	**77**
Brighton	1	31	0.9	**76**
Derwent Valley	1	30	0.8	**70**
Northern Midlands	6	32	1.3	**69**
Latrobe (Tas.)	6	33	2.8	**67**
Launceston	2	32	1.7	**66**
Kingborough	2	30	1.8	**66**

The top 10 worst Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Tasmania by Rental Pain Index (RPI) for September 2024 reveal significant rental stress across the state. Devonport leads the list with an RPI of 85, where renters spend 34% of their income on rent, paired with a vacancy rate of 1.7%. Waratah-Wynyard follows closely with an RPI of 84, facing similar affordability pressures and a low vacancy rate of 0.7%, indicating limited housing availability.

In Central Coast and George Town, RPIs of 80 and 77 reflect ongoing rental stress, with rent-to-income ratios of 34% and vacancy rates as low as 0.6%. Brighton, with an RPI of 76, rounds out the top five, where renters spend 31% of their income on rent.

Across these LGAs, low vacancy rates and high rent-to-income ratios are key drivers of rental stress, with limited rental stock on the market intensifying competition for housing. These figures highlight the ongoing affordability challenges faced by renters in Tasmania, where tight markets and rising rents are exacerbating the rental crisis.

MAXIMUM SCORES BY STATE

STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
NSW	North Nowra - Bomaderry	5	35	0.59	**100**
NSW	Bidwill - Hebersham - Emerton	19	37	0.7	**100**
NSW	Blackheath - Megalong Valley	6	35	0.28	**100**
NSW	Panania (South) - Picnic Point	17	36	0.82	**100**
NSW	Eden	10	47	0	**100**
NSW	Sans Souci - Ramsgate	14	40	1	**100**
NSW	Riverwood	13	49	0.92	**100**
NSW	Tuncurry	11	53	1	**100**
NSW	Cromer	19	42	0.88	**100**
NSW	Budgewoi - Buff Point - Halekulani	6	38	0.33	**100**
NSW	Auburn - South	19	42	0.93	**100**
NSW	Katoomba - Leura	7	39	0.64	**100**

STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
VIC	Mornington - West	14	45	0.97	**100**
VIC	Hastings - Somers	6	35	0.6	**100**

STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
QLD	Bundaberg East - Kalkie	19	35	0.29	**100**
QLD	Nanango	17	43	0.26	**100**
QLD	Woodridge	12	41	0.48	**100**
QLD	Kingaroy Surrounds - North	21	37	0.28	**100**
QLD	Redcliffe	13	46	0.45	**100**
QLD	Currumbin Waters	6	52	0.84	**100**
QLD	Wacol	16	37	0.58	**100**
QLD	Burleigh Waters	10	53	1.02	**100**
QLD	Svensson Heights - Norville	11	42	0.45	**100**
QLD	Manunda	16	37	0.15	**100**

MAXIMUM SCORES BY STATE

STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
SA	Moonta	14	37	0	**100**
SA	Christie Downs	12	45	0.22	**100**
SA	Aldinga	11	37	0.4	**100**
SA	Ingle Farm	15	37	0.97	**100**
SA	Hackham - Onkaparinga Hills	10	35	0	**100**
SA	Christies Beach	8	38	0.37	**100**

STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
WA	Pinjarra	28	37	0.69	**100**
WA	Alexander Heights - Koondoola	15	36	0.61	**100**
WA	Bayonet Head - Lower King	10	35	0	**100**
WA	Margaret River	18	36	1.02	**100**

STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
TAS	West Ulverstone	6	37	0.81	**100**

WORST 25 NSW

Rank	STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
1	NSW	Tweed Heads South	11	**69**	1.86	82
2	NSW	Greenacre - North	23	**54**	2.32	77
3	NSW	Bass Hill - Georges Hall	21	**53**	2.48	75
4	NSW	Windang - Primbee	7	**53**	1.21	97
5	NSW	Tuncurry	11	**53**	1	100
6	NSW	Nambucca Heads	1	**51**	0.35	78
7	NSW	Tweed Heads	7	**51**	1.98	85
8	NSW	Riverwood	13	**49**	0.92	100
9	NSW	Pottsville	10	**49**	2.51	83
10	NSW	Brunswick Heads - Ocean Shores	4	**48**	2.3	79
11	NSW	Forster	5	**48**	2.39	80
12	NSW	Eastlakes	16	**47**	2.65	77
13	NSW	Greenacre - South	11	**47**	1.2	88
14	NSW	Ashcroft - Busby - Miller	19	**47**	2.3	78
15	NSW	Tea Gardens - Hawks Nest	4	**47**	1.62	90
16	NSW	Eden	10	**47**	0	100
17	NSW	Condell Park	11	**46**	1.93	81
18	NSW	Guildford - South Granville	24	**46**	1.69	83
19	NSW	Maroubra - South	16	**46**	1.99	85
20	NSW	Malabar - La Perouse	16	**46**	1.56	91
21	NSW	Anna Bay	7	**45**	1.23	98
22	NSW	Murwillumbah	6	**45**	0.66	93
23	NSW	Berry - Kangaroo Valley	6	**45**	1.42	96
24	NSW	Lurnea - Cartwright	14	**45**	0.98	96
25	NSW	Macksville - Scotts Head	3	**45**	1.57	75

High RPI scores (over 75) are ranked by worst levels of affordability.

WORST 25 VIC

Rank	STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
1	VIC	Mornington - West	14	**45**	0.97	100
2	VIC	Rosebud - McCrae	6	**41**	2.3	83
3	VIC	Doncaster	20	**38**	1.8	82
4	VIC	Mornington - East	16	**38**	1.41	86
5	VIC	Otway	25	**38**	0.68	75
6	VIC	Mooroopna	22	**38**	1.11	92
7	VIC	Castlemaine	6	**37**	1.01	99
8	VIC	Campbellfield - Coolaroo	17	**37**	1.69	83
9	VIC	Portarlington	4	**37**	2.37	83
10	VIC	Dandenong - South	22	**37**	1.06	93
11	VIC	Maryborough (Vic.)	3	**36**	1.53	76
12	VIC	Clayton (North) - Notting Hill	18	**36**	1.77	86
13	VIC	Wonthaggi - Inverloch	7	**36**	1.44	96
14	VIC	Balwyn	9	**36**	2.11	79
15	VIC	Phillip Island	4	**35**	2.9	77
16	VIC	Bundoora - West	27	**35**	1.79	83
17	VIC	Thomastown	19	**35**	1.22	88
18	VIC	Euroa	4	**35**	1.75	85
19	VIC	Brighton (Vic.)	5	**35**	1.94	90
20	VIC	Pakenham - South East	15	**35**	1.23	88
21	VIC	Hastings - Somers	6	**35**	0.6	100
22	VIC	Dandenong - North	19	**35**	0.88	94
23	VIC	Doncaster East - South	10	**35**	1.8	82
24	VIC	Springvale	19	**35**	0.92	95
25	VIC	Lalor - East	19	**35**	0.81	92

High RPI scores (over 75) are ranked by worst levels of affordability.

WORST 25 QLD

Rank	STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
1	QLD	Clear Island Waters	8	**68**	1.92	86
2	QLD	Coombabah	11	**60**	1.75	83
3	QLD	Bribie Island	7	**55**	1.08	96
4	QLD	Tewantin	8	**54**	1.18	97
5	QLD	Pialba - Eli Waters	9	**53**	1.01	94
6	QLD	Burleigh Waters	10	**53**	1.02	100
7	QLD	Cooloola	5	**52**	1.27	87
8	QLD	Currumbin Waters	6	**52**	0.84	100
9	QLD	Labrador	9	**51**	1.38	91
10	QLD	Burrum - Fraser	10	**50**	2.06	82
11	QLD	Elanora	10	**50**	2.1	86
12	QLD	Southern Moreton Bay Islands	8	**49**	2.65	79
13	QLD	Biggera Waters	11	**49**	2.12	79
14	QLD	Caloundra - Kings Beach	9	**48**	2.86	79
15	QLD	Southport - South	6	**48**	1.54	93
16	QLD	Maryborough Surrounds - South	16	**48**	1.97	80
17	QLD	Magnetic Island	6	**48**	0	95
18	QLD	Point Vernon	16	**48**	2.05	82
19	QLD	Palm Beach	16	**48**	2.7	82
20	QLD	Carrara	3	**47**	1.25	83
21	QLD	Torquay - Scarness - Kawungan	14	**47**	0.97	98
22	QLD	Golden Beach - Pelican Waters	6	**47**	2.36	79
23	QLD	Robina - West	4	**47**	1.57	80
24	QLD	Southport - North	7	**47**	1.07	90
25	QLD	Redcliffe	13	**46**	0.45	100

High RPI scores (over 75) are ranked by worst levels of affordability.

WORST 25 SA

Rank	STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
1	SA	Elizabeth	22	**47**	0.83	91
2	SA	Victor Harbor	11	**45**	1.09	98
3	SA	Christie Downs	12	**45**	0.22	100
4	SA	Goolwa - Port Elliot	11	**44**	1.81	92
5	SA	Smithfield - Elizabeth North	18	**43**	1.09	89
6	SA	Hackham West - Huntfield Heights	13	**41**	0.89	98
7	SA	Mannum	18	**41**	0	95
8	SA	Mitchell Park	10	**41**	1.05	97
9	SA	Morphett Vale - West	8	**40**	1.63	84
10	SA	Morphett Vale - East	15	**40**	1	94
11	SA	Port Adelaide	13	**39**	0.57	92
12	SA	Salisbury	15	**39**	0.58	96
13	SA	Hope Valley - Modbury	16	**39**	0.82	98
14	SA	Paradise - Newton	15	**38**	1.39	91
15	SA	Pooraka - Cavan	20	**38**	1.72	83
16	SA	Christies Beach	8	**38**	0.37	100
17	SA	Yankalilla	6	**38**	1.1	99
18	SA	The Parks	14	**38**	1.13	89
19	SA	Adelaide	9	**37**	1.69	88
20	SA	Seaton - Grange	9	**37**	0.87	97
21	SA	Warradale	11	**37**	0.74	93
22	SA	Aldinga	11	**37**	0.4	100
23	SA	Ingle Farm	15	**37**	0.97	100
24	SA	Davoren Park	14	**37**	1.45	86
25	SA	Reynella	15	**37**	1.29	87

High RPI scores (over 75) are ranked by worst levels of affordability.

WORST 25 WA

Rank	STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
1	WA	Busselton - West	10	**45**	1.08	94
2	WA	Augusta	18	**42**	2.44	75
3	WA	College Grove - Carey Park	23	**42**	1.83	82
4	WA	Busselton - East	12	**42**	0.39	97
5	WA	Rockingham	14	**41**	1.57	86
6	WA	Exmouth	9	**41**	0.6	90
7	WA	Gosnells	29	**41**	1.53	91
8	WA	Halls Head - Erskine	17	**40**	1.81	88
9	WA	Girrawheen	22	**40**	0.22	99
10	WA	Hamilton Hill	20	**39**	1.95	81
11	WA	Denmark	11	**39**	1.41	96
12	WA	Balga - Mirrabooka	26	**39**	0.51	93
13	WA	Withers - Usher	19	**39**	2.22	78
14	WA	Bentley - Wilson - St James	26	**38**	0.96	93
15	WA	Camillo - Champion Lakes	29	**38**	1.61	91
16	WA	Willagee	27	**38**	1.24	98
17	WA	Maddington - Orange Grove - Martin	25	**38**	1.79	82
18	WA	Dianella - South	18	**37**	0.61	97
19	WA	Spearwood	16	**37**	1.24	88
20	WA	Broome	6	**37**	1.37	86
21	WA	East Bunbury - Glen Iris	15	**37**	2.09	79
22	WA	Noranda	13	**37**	1	95
23	WA	Balcatta - Hamersley	22	**37**	0.8	97
24	WA	Pinjarra	28	**37**	0.69	100
25	WA	Nollamara - Westminster	25	**37**	0.59	91

High RPI scores (over 75) are ranked by worst levels of affordability.

WORST 10 TAS

Rank	STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
1	TAS	Bridgewater - Gagebrook	2	**40**	1.1	81
2	TAS	East Devonport	5	**39**	1.26	97
3	TAS	Mornington - Warrane	4	**37**	1.24	91
4	TAS	Ulverstone	3	**37**	0.45	80
5	TAS	West Ulverstone	6	**37**	0.81	100
6	TAS	Newnham - Mayfield	5	**36**	2.01	78
7	TAS	Wynyard	2	**36**	0.75	84
8	TAS	Invermay	2	**35**	1.1	83
9	TAS	George Town	2	**34**	1.44	77
10	TAS	Devonport	5	**34**	1.23	96

High RPI scores (over 75) are ranked by worst levels of affordability.

WORST 5 ACT

Rank	STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
1	ACT	Ainslie	2	**29**	1	76
2	ACT	Holt	4	**28**	1.17	85
3	ACT	Holder	10	**26**	0.9	91
4	ACT	Bonython	3	**25**	0.57	79
5	ACT	Giralang	5	**24**	1.92	78

WORST 5 NT

Rank	STATE	Suburb Area	Average 12M Rental Increase (%)	Rental Affordability (% of income)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Rental Pain Index
1	NT	Coconut Grove	6	**36**	1.16	98
2	NT	Gray	9	**30**	1.23	83
3	NT	Mount Johns	9	**27**	1.86	79
4	NT	Larapinta	12	**26**	0.58	91
5	NT	Parap	5	**25**	1.47	83

High RPI scores (over 75) are ranked by worst levels of affordability.

DATA MEASURES

Definition of SA2 (Statistical Area 2)
The Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) is a spatial unit used in the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) to represent '**suburb areas**.' Each SA2 is designed to represent a community that interacts socially and economically. SA2s serve as a practical framework for the collection and dissemination of granular, area-based statistics.

Dates
Current data measures are based on SA2 rolling 12 month medians .

Geospatial Allocation of Rentals to SA2
Rentals are allocated to their respective SA2s through latitude and longitude coordinates. Each rental listing is tagged with these geospatial identifiers, enabling precise allocation to SA2s. This methodology ensures spatial accuracy, allowing for more robust and region-specific analytics.

Advertised Rentals
The percentage of advertised rentals, which includes both houses and units, is calculated relative to the total number of rentals managed by real estate agents according to the 2021 Census data. This provides a snapshot of available rental options within each SA2, contributing to our Advertised Rentals Score.

Vacancy Rates
Vacancy rates are derived from listings that are still advertised after 21 days, expressed as a percentage of properties managed by real estate agents within each SA2. The metric is observed both for the current period and three months prior, which allows us to calculate the Vacancy Change over a three-month period.

Rental Changes
We examine the median rent prices for houses and units now and 12 months ago. The number of each property type rented within the SA2 is used to calculate a weighted average rent change. This weighted measure reflects the diverse property landscape within each SA2.

Household Income and Affordability
Household income data based on Census 2021 is used to provide a current perspective on affordability. Affordability measures for both houses and units are calculated as a percentage of household income allocated to rent. These percentages are then weighted based on the counts of each property type within the SA2 to generate a composite Rent Affordability Score. Household income levels from Census August 2021 and indexed to a current estimate using Australian Bureau of Statistics data.

In summary, our methodology offers a multi-faceted view of rental market dynamics at the SA2 level. By integrating diverse metrics—from advertised rentals and vacancy rates to rent changes and affordability—we provide a nuanced Rental Pain Index that encapsulates the complexity of rental experiences within specific communities.

SCORING AND RANKING

The "**Rental Pain Index**" is a composite metric engineered to provide a quantifiable measure of the challenges faced by renters in a given real estate market. The index is scored on a scale of 1 to 100, where a score of 100 denotes the most unfavourable conditions for renters, and a score of 1 signifies optimal conditions. The index integrates five key variables, each contributing a unique perspective on rental market dynamics. These are Rent Change, Advertised Rentals, Vacancy Rates, Vacancy Change and Rent Affordability.

Rent Change Score: Captures the annual percentage change in rents. A score of 100 is assigned for a 5% or greater increase in rent, indicating heightened financial stress for renters. Conversely, a 0% or lesser increase is scored as 1, suggesting stable conditions.

Advertised Rentals Score: Represents the percentage of advertised rentals in the market. A low percentage (below 5%) indicates fewer choices for renters, scoring 100. Above 10% scores as 1, signalling a renter-friendly market.

Vacancy Score: Measures vacancy rates. A score of 100 is given for rates below 1%, indicating a market unfavourable for renters. Rates above 3.5% score as 1, showing a balanced or renter-friendly market.

Vacancy Change Score: Accounts for the three-month change in vacancy rates. A decrease of 0.5% or more scores 100, indicating a tightening market. An increase of 0.5% or more scores 1, suggesting a softening market.

Rent Affordability Score: Measures the percentage of household income allocated to rent. Over 35% scores 100, indicating unaffordability, whereas below 20% scores 1, suggesting affordability. Each of these variables is assigned a weight to reflect its relative impact on rental pain: Rent Change (30%), Advertised Rentals (20%), Vacancy Rates (25%), Vacancy Change (10%), and Rent Affordability (15%). These weights were determined based on the immediacy and severity of each variable's impact on renters.

The Rental Pain Index is computed as a weighted sum of these individual scores, providing a comprehensive yet nuanced snapshot of the rental market from the renter's perspective.

Top lists per state: With many suburb areas featuring the same score of 100, we have added a further selection step based on total rentals. Prior to ranking based on the RPI, we filter SA2s with 100 or more properties rented by real estate agents (private rentals).

PRESS RELEASE

Suburbtrends Rental Pain Index September 2024: The housing crisis persists
Date: 5th September 2024
For Immediate Release

The latest Suburbtrends "Rental Pain Index" for September 2024 reveals that despite modest easing in rental price increases in some areas, Australia's rental crisis remains far from resolved. New data examining Local Government Areas (LGAs) paints a sobering picture, with many regions still experiencing extreme rental stress, exacerbated by low vacancy rates and a shortage of affordable rental stock.

Kent Lardner, founder of Suburbtrends, warns against viewing slower rental price growth as an indicator of improvement. "Focusing solely on rent increases can be misleading. Even in areas where price hikes have eased, many renters continue to face severe affordability issues, with rent consuming well over 30% of household income. This is especially true across numerous LGAs, where vacancy rates remain critically low, exacerbating competition for already scarce rental properties. The slowing pace of rental increases does not mean the crisis is over—it simply means the pressure has shifted slightly, but the overall stress on renters remains severe."

September's data highlights that the top 20 LGAs in regions like Queensland and South Australia continue to report Rental Pain Index (RPI) scores over 80, showing entrenched rental stress. Lower rental increases do little to alleviate the risk of homelessness when rents remain unaffordable for many. With vacancy rates below 1% in some areas, competition for housing remains fierce.

Lardner emphasises the human cost of the crisis: "It's not just about numbers; it's about people at risk of losing their homes. The RPI data shows that the risk of displacement and homelessness is still very real. Families are being priced out, even in regions where rents aren't rising as fast. The system continues to fail those who need stable housing the most."

He points to data showing that in several LGAs, rental affordability remains well above 30% of household income, despite slower rent increases. This discrepancy highlights that the core issue is not just the rate of rental growth, but the fundamental lack of affordable housing options. The persistent housing shortage is keeping vacancy rates dangerously low, making it harder for vulnerable populations to find shelter.

A solution put forward by faith-based organisations like Sydney Anglican Property (SAP) and Anglicare offers a glimpse of hope. These groups are leveraging their underutilised land and buildings to provide long-term affordable housing solutions. Lardner praises their mission-driven approach: "Initiatives like SAP's efforts to develop affordable housing on church-owned land demonstrate the kind of innovative thinking we need. By turning unused spaces into housing, we can start to address the supply-side issues at the heart of this crisis."

SAP's collaboration with Anglicare, including their bid to build 1,000 affordable rental dwellings under the Federal Government's Housing Australia Future Fund, is a positive example of how faith-based groups can play a crucial role in tackling the rental crisis.

Lardner concludes, "While public policy needs to align population growth with housing supply, faith-based initiatives offer immediate, community-focused solutions that can help ease the crisis in the short term. What we need now is for these efforts to be scaled, and for broader policy changes to support sustainable, affordable housing development."

For full September 2024 Rental Pain Index data, media outlets can contact us directly.

Contact:
Kent Lardner
Phone: 0458 936 912
Email: kentlardner@suburbtrends.com.au

FAQ

Questions and Answers for Journalists

Q1: Can you define a 'Suburb Area' and explain its importance?
A: Our naming convention of 'Suburb Area' refers to a Statistical Area 2 (SA2), as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The SA2 construct allows for larger, more reliable datasets, mitigating the statistical volatility often associated with smaller geographical units. This granularity strengthens the analytical rigour of our reports. To enter the final report, SA2s must feature a minimum count of 100 private rentals based on August 2021 Census data.

Q2: What exactly is a vacancy rate, and how is it calculated?
A: A vacancy rate represents the percentage of rental listings that remain unoccupied after being advertised for a period of 21 days. This metric is calculated in reference to the total number of rentals managed by real estate agents within a specific SA2, based on 2021 Census data.

Q3: Could you elaborate on what the weighted average rent change is?
A: The weighted average rent change takes into account the median advertised rental prices for both houses and units. It sorts these prices from highest to lowest and identifies the median, using a rolling 12-month dataset for statistical robustness. The median price is then weighted according to the number of each property type rented, as per 2021 Census data. For example, if 50 units and 500 houses are rented, the median change for houses carries ten times more weight.

Q4: What does 'household income' refer to and what are its limitations?
A: Household income signifies the median income level for households within an SA2, based on 2021 Census data and is indexed to offer a current estimate. However, this measure tends to underestimate the financial burden on renters who earn less than the median income, thereby not fully encapsulating the rental stress experienced by this demographic.

Q5: How is the weighted rental affordability measure determined?
A: This measure calculates median rental costs for houses and units as a percentage of the current estimated household income. These percentages are then amalgamated and weighted according to the number of each property type rented, as found in the 2021 Census. For example, if an SA2 has 50 rented units and 500 rented houses, the affordability measure for houses will be tenfold more influential.

Q6: Can you explain how the Rental Pain Index is formulated?
A: The Rental Pain Index is an integrated metric comprising five unique variables: Rent Change Score, Advertised Rentals Score, Vacancy Score, Vacancy Change Score, and Rent Affordability Score. Each is scored between 1 and 100, with 100 indicating maximal rental stress. As a general guide, we set 75 and above as a measure of extremely hard market conditions for renters.

Q7: I'd like to create a report specifically for my local area. Can you assist?
A: Absolutely. The full national dataset is available for download, offering additional data that can be filtered to focus on specific regions. To obtain the download link and for guidance on crafting a localised report, please contact Kent Lardner at 0458 936 912.

KENT LARDNER

Kent's focus on property data and analytics started in 1999 working in lenders mortgage insurance (GE). Whilst heading up the valuation services team he studied statistics and trained with industry experts in the USA and Canada.

These skills helped him design the PriceFinder platform where Kent was one of the original company founders. With the sale of Pricefinder to the Domain Group, Kent took a lead role at CoreLogic, heading up the analytics team and products for the banking sector. This included the design and roll-out of various risk products for valuers and banks. The CoreLogic opportunity extended to China, where he developed an automated valuation model for the largest bank in the world (ICBC).

His focus today is Suburbtrends. Kent's reports are published on a regular basis by leading media outlets .

Mobile: 0458 936 912

Email: kentlardner@suburbtrends.com.au